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ABSTRACT

The literature on the field of older adults in higher education is fairly new. Until 1975 almost all of it was normative or speculative. With the publication of the first volume of the journal "Educational Gerontology" in 1985, however, the amount of literature in the field increased dramatically. The literature on older adults in higher education may be divided into works dealing with the following topics: the characteristics, attributes, and attitudes of older adults; reasons why older adults participate in higher education; the learning preferences and abilities of older adults; and support services available to older adults and the effectiveness of these services. The research shows that the older adults who enroll in higher education are generally well educated already, in good health, and without financial problems. Older adults appear to have little need, and for that matter little desire, for supportive services. In fact, many intended incentives such as free tuition and the auditing option appear to be disincentives for some older adults. The amount of research on older adults in higher education is disproportionate to the number of persons who are ever likely to enroll. Areas where more research could be useful include studies of programs offered at community colleges or qualitative research on learning styles and classroom behaviors of older adults. (MN)

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OLDER ADULTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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Many colleges and universities now offer courses for senior citizens. Some institutions recognize a social responsibility to meet the needs of a growing elderly population; others perceive the older students as a means to balance declining enrollment among traditional college students. The literature of adult and higher education is replete with normative articles analyzing the potential relationship between older adults and higher education (such as Cyphert and Boggs 1981, Cross 1982). This paper reviews empirically based research, both descriptive and experimental, about older adults in colleges and universities.

The literature of this field is fairly new. Until 1975, almost all of it was normative or speculative, although a noteworthy exception still frequently cited was an unusually comprehensive survey undertaken by Hendrickson and Barnes (1964, 1967). With the publication of the first volume of Educational Gerontology in 1975, however, the amount of literature increased dramatically. That was also the year of the first Elderhostel program. Thus, the literature base for this review begins in 1975, drawn largely, but not exclusively, from Educational Gerontology. Several areas were excluded from review, such as the many program descriptions available in journals or as ERIC documents. There is also a growing body of literature about the use of older adults in higher education as instructors or other

educational resources, but the focus here is on older adults as learners. Intergenerational education will be considered briefly, but Huey Long has reviewed that topic sufficiently (1983). Two published reviews have already addressed the topic of this paper (Covey 1981, Kingston 1982), but the findings of recent research suggests that a re-examination of the literature would be insightful. This review, it should be noted, examines the broader literature on older adults outside of higher education only insofar as it may be useful to know the characteristics and motives of those who choose not to participate in college level activities.

Two philosophical presumptions underlie this review. One is that colleges and universities are not the appropriate providers of all educational services for all people. The other supposition is that the similarities between persons are usually of greater significance than the differences, especially for the purpose of planning within any one type of institution.

The review is divided into four sections. Much literature considers which older adults participate in higher education: their characteristics, attributes, and attitudes. Another issue is why do they participate? What motives and incentives exist? A further consideration is learning preferences and abilities--what are older adults learning, and how? Finally, what support services are offered, what are desired, and what is their effectiveness? Conclusions and recommendations for practice and research will be offered.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Heisel, Darkenwald, and Anderson (1981) analyzed a national data base to determine the educational behavior of adults age 60 and above. The original subject data was collected by the Bureau of Census for the National Center for Educational Statistics in 1975. A smaller sample of 510 persons was identified as meeting the criteria--over age 59 and enrolled in some form of organized educational activity. Of those, 34% were men and 66% were women, a typical gender ratio in this age group for participants in education. One fourth had less than a high school education, but another 27% were college graduates. Of the total group, 6.9% were currently enrolled in a four-year college and 11.4% in a two-year college, so over 80% were receiving their education at some place other than a college or university.

Hooper and March (1978) surveyed 204 "guest students" at the University of Wisconsin to compare with an earlier sample of non-students. Guest students are those individuals age 62 or older receiving tuition waivers to audit courses. Those results were then added to a later study by Hooper (1981) of older adults enrolled for credit at Wisconsin. In the entire thirteen campus University of Wisconsin system, only 72 older adults enrolled for credit could be found. Unlike the guests, credit students pay regular tuition. The mean age of credit students was 67.1, auditors 70.8, and non-students 74.7. University students, then, were younger than non-students, and credit students were youngest of all. Almost half of the non-students had less than a high

school education, whereas only 22% of the auditors and 16% of the credit students were in that category. The 1978 survey found that 58% of the students owned their own homes, and another 33% lived in retirement complexes requiring major financial investment. The older students were also more likely than non-students to own their own homes, have a spouse, and still be employed at least part-time. Two thirds of older adults in all groups were involved in volunteer activities. Overall, Hooper (1981) found that the two students groups were more different from the non-students than from each other.

Although most campus programs for older adults attract only local residents, Elderhostel students are a highly mobile group. Martin Knowlton (1977), the founder of the Elderhostels, reported that only 10% of the Elderhostel students commuted, while 90% came from a distance and lived in the dormitories like regular college students (1977). In 1976, there were 1,280 students from 24 states enrolled in Elderhostels in the original New England consortium of six colleges. The mean age was 70, and 75% were female. Only 11% classified themselves as housewives or former blue-collar workers; the remainder were white-collar workers, teachers, or other professionals. Only five years later there were more than 30,000 students enrolled in Elderhostels in all fifty states (Romaniuk and Romaniuk 1982). The Romaniuks surveyed all students enrolled in the first week of Elderhostel programming at the fourteen colleges and universities participating in Virginia. The mean age of that group was 66.8, 64% were female, and 68% were married. Most interestingly, 58% had participated in an

Elderhostel before, and 69% were from non-urban areas. The students in Virginia came from 35 states, and thus were apparently in good health, active, and could afford to travel.

Other studies also indicate that the older adults who attend college programs have no significant disabilities. In a survey of adults over 59 enrolled for credit at the University of Maryland, 64% reported missing no classes because of illness, 46% required no medication on a regular basis, and 88% used their own cars to get to campus (Perkins and Robertson-Tchabo 1981). Again, these are highly mobile persons. Another study found all of the subjects living independently and reporting good to excellent health (Papalia-Finlay et al. 1981). The stereotype of frail, senile senior citizens does not apply to those who enroll in higher education.

In an attempt to make some accurate generalizations about older adults on campus, Judith Hooper and colleagues (1986) administered a battery of 14 well-validated tests to three comparison groups at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. There were 60 in each group: the young, age 17-23, the middle-aged, 37-43, and the elderly, 61-80. The instruments measured formal reasoning ability, memory, and personality correlates. All three groups, including the elderly, had high self-esteem, felt in control of their lives, had high tolerance for ambiguity, and were more field dependent. The older students had superior vocabularies and formal reasoning abilities, which are usually reliable predictors of success in college. The young, however, had better memories and performed the tests more quickly. Hooper

et al. note that the older adults' abilities even in those areas was adequate for college study. They also found great variability in the older adults' performance, with many of them scoring better than the younger students on all measures.

Perhaps because of the high levels of confidence reports above, senior adult students are more active than non-students. However, Covey (1983) discovered no correlation between the level of social activity and enrollment of older adults. Covey suggests that the seniors have many outlets for social activity and thus do not rely on higher education to meet that need. On the other hand, there was a strong correlation between the levels of mental and physical activity and college enrollment. About 62% of the older students reported moderate to high levels of activity in those areas, compared to only 42% of the non-students.

Most exceptional are the students identified as "late bloomers" (Brown 1983). Brown defines late bloomers as persons who late in life discover that they possess undeveloped potential, and who finds ways to develop that potential. The subjects were the 17 winners of a national scholarship competition for college students over age 50. The winners' age range was 50-78, and their grade point averages were all over 3.5. Five had a background of poverty, and twelve were middle-class. A qualitative analysis of interview transcripts revealed these characteristics: high intelligence, average to robust health, avid desire to learn, and a sense of obligation to society, to make a significant contribution. Twelve were in

college for enrichment, while five sought professional training. Seven were Ph.D. candidates. Most remarkable was their ability to overcome adversity. Their recent personal histories included fighting forced retirement, overcoming blindness, recovering a memory destroyed by shock therapy, seeking refuge from oppressive foreign governments, alcoholism, abusive marriages, and so on. All had an unusual capacity for growth and change, and were now excelling in college. These persons had as much to offer the colleges as the colleges could offer them. Obviously, these are not typical older students, but they illustrate the upper range, the type of students that every college seeks; regardless of age.

Hooper and March (1978) hypothesized that the older adults on campus had either prior personal experience in higher education or vicarious experience through an immediate family member, such as a spouse, sibling, son or daughter. The older adults auditing courses at the University of Wisconsin had a mean education level of 14.8 years, with 93% reporting previous personal or vicarious experience in college. Because more students were married than non-students, it appears that the support of a spouse is an additional incentive for enrolling. Surprisingly, 33% reported that their own parents had received a college education. Hooper's later study of older students receiving credit found a mean education level of 14.7 years, with 95.6% reporting previous personal or vicarious experience in higher education (1981). A similar study at the University of Maryland found 88% of the older credit students has previous college experience and 65% already had bachelor's or advanced

degrees (Perkins and Robertson-Tchabo 1981). Among the first Elderhostel students, 70% had prior college exposure (Knowlton 1977), and later groups attending Virginia Elderhostels had a mean education of 15.7 years (Romaniuk and Romaniuk 1982). The high levels of education imply several several other characteristics. For example, having retired from long careers in white-collar or professional jobs, these older students are probably in little need of financial aid. Furthermore, since most of the older colleges students are actually college alumni, they are quite capable of intellectual inquiry and do not need any special curricula. They should probably fit in well in any classroom.

The profile of an older adult in higher education shows a healthy, married, financially stable retired white-collar worker or professional with several years of college experience already. In other words, older students are just regular college students grown up, having already accomplished what the younger people on campus aspire to do. However, as Knowlton points out, there are exceptions within any group, some who live in poverty or who never finished grammar school, but who now seek advanced learning. The challenge for the college administrator is to accommodate all of those diverse individuals.

MOTIVES AND INCENTIVES

Roger Boshier and others have conducted many studies of adult motivation using the Education Participation Scale (EPS). Factors indentified by the EPS are Escape/Stimulation, Social

Welfare, Social Contact, Cognitive Interest, Professional Advancement, and External Expectations. However, since Professional Advancement is unimportant for older adults who are usually retired, and those adults would only be frustrated by irrelevant survey questions, the original EPS has limited value for diagnosing older adults' motives. To create a more valid instrument, Boshier and Riddell (1978) deleted the questions about job performance, performed a factor analyis, and tested the revised questionnaire's reliability and validity by correlation with several other instruments. As expected, neither Professional Advancement nor External Expectations were factors for the older adults. Most significantly, the adults surveyed said Cognitive Interest has "moderate" to "much" influence on participation, followed closely by the Social Contact factor. Escape/Stimulation had almost no influence.

To add further validity to the revised EPS, Breda Bova (1981) gave the questionnaire to Elderhostel participants at the University of New Mexico and College of Santa Fe. Again, Cognitive Interest was the greatest motivator, and Social Contact was a secondary influence. Bova found no significant difference between the motives of men and women in the Elderhostels, nor was there any difference between the 55-65 and 66-82 age groups. Similar results were found in another EPS survey in Wisconsin (Dellmann-Jenkins and Papalia-Finlay 1983). Ironically, after using the full, original EPS, the Wisconsin researchers concluded that "the EPS may need to be revised in order to have higher face validity for older adults participating in courses offered by

colleges and universities," apparently unaware that a thoroughly tested revision already exists.

However, another researcher, Robert Conter (1981), did his homework and cites the Boshier and Riddell and Bova studies as models for his own survey comparing programmers' expectations with the older adults' actual motives for participation in Elderhostels. Conter found that the programmers emphasized older adults' "needs," vaguely defined as "stated concerns" and "problems of aging." The older adults themselves preferred courses classified as meeting "wants," meaning programs which offer "personal growth and exploration of some new subject matter" or "self-enhancement and community participation." Those "wants" appear similar to the EPS factors of Cognitive Interest and Social Contact cited by Boshier and Bova.

The other studies of Elderhostel students found other influences as well. Knowlton reports that typical reasons given for participating in the early Elderhostels were a need for change, cost, subject matter (cognitive interest), and the time (1977). Apparently, the one and two weeks courses fit the lifestyles of the Elderhostelers better than quarter or semester commitments. The 1982 Elderhostel survey (Romaniuk and Romaniuk) also found that the highest rated motives were related to course content, but other important motives were the desire to visit new places and meet new people. The latter findings, along with Knowlton's "need to change," suggest that Escape/Stimulation may be a more important factor for some older adults than indicated by Boshier and Riddell and Bova. The Romaniuks' survey also

noted differences between the motives of new and returning Elderhostel participants. The new students were more influenced by the desire to try something new, costs, and the advice of friends, whereas the returning students were much more motivated to learn new things and visit new places. The repeating students appear to have discovered the intrinsic value of the Elderhostel experience, while the newcomers still needed external reinforcement.

Almost all of the literature notes the older adults' interest in learning for its own sake, for personal interest. For example, surveys by Kingston (1982) and Kingston and Drotter (1983) both reported the top ranked reasons for enrolling in college as intellectual stimulation and interest in particular subjects. Another survey found these motives: personal growth and satisfaction, academic interests, desire to remain mentally and physically active, and the quest for a degree (Perkins and Robertson-Tchabo 1981). At this late stage of life, few adults have any vocational needs, so they are free to pursue learning for its instrinsic value. Any college would benefit from such highly motivated students, especially the small liberal arts colleges which have little to offer in other areas such as continuing professional education.

Most studies of motivations and incentives are quantitative surveys. This section will conclude with the findings from the only major qualitative study of older adults' motives for learning (Wolf 1983). Wolf's subjects included, but were not limited to, those enrolled in higher education. The value of

this study is the revelation of motives not discernable by any of the standard questionnaires such as the EPS. Wolf speculated that older adults sought further education as a means of "life review," an attempt to find meaning for their lives in a historical or cultural perspective. To test this hypothesis, Wolf conducted a series of three in-depth interviews with subjects aged 60 to 80. An elderly Polish immigrant working on a bachelor's degree explained, "I want to put together the bits and pieces to make a picture of my life." Wolf reported that "often the older people seemed surprised to hear themselves recall stories of early life and youthful dreams gone astray . . . many were reworking scenes from the past." The theme of thwarted educational dreams was recurrent. Immigrants recalled being told not to rise above their social class, and women had been frustrated by the limited sex roles of an earlier era. The Great Depression and wars prevented many from attaining an advanced education in their youth. All were enrolled in college late in life, making up for lost time. A few, however, seemed intent on forgetting the past by keeping their present lives as busy as possible. Somehow, the EPS Cognitive Interest factor does not capture the deep motives of this elderly group. These students lack the affluence of many older adults on campus, but continuing education administrators should keep these persons in mind when planning programs and services.

LEARNING PREFERENCES, ABILITIES, AND ATTITUDES

Cross observes that older adults are usually more interested in humanities, social sciences, and languages than young people (1982). Knowlton founded the Elderhostel program partly as a means to find students for small liberal arts colleges in the New England states (1977). The survey research supports the notion that older adults are liberal learners. Covey's study of 245 senior adults in Boulder, Colorado found that 135 preferred a general education, the traditional arts and sciences (1982). Another 99 were interested in arts and crafts, 79 health, 64 survival, 54 religion, and 54 social concerns. Covey comments that all of the latter interests are met by courses offered elsewhere in the community, such as churches, hospitals, and civic centers, but the colleges are the most appropriate resource for intellectual study, which ranked first among the older adults. At the University of Maryland, 70% of the senior adults were enrolled in humanities such as languages, art, music, English, or history, compared to only 23% of the regular students who were taking humanities courses at the time of the survey (Perkins and Robertson-Tchabo 1981). However, there were older adults enrolled in every division of the university as well. A study of older women enrolled in continuing higher education found that 89% were interested in the humanities, but only 6% showed interest in health or legal issues and 5% in arts and crafts (Papalia-Finlay et al. 1981). Unfortunately, there was no information about the source or method of sampling for that survey, but clearly, most older adults expect to study neither macrame nor aeronautical engineering in college.

Much attention has been give to the question of whether older adults prefer structure or unstructured classes, lecture or discussion methods. To what extent do older adults expect to get involved in their classes? Hooper found that at the University of Wisconsin, 41% of the auditing students preferred lecture, compared to 29% of the credit students (1981). Among the auditing students, 51% of the women preferred lecture, but only 28% of the men reported that emphasis. That gender ratio was almost reversed among the credit students, a phenomena which is not easily explained. The auditing students who like lectures reported that they felt "safer" in such classes, or enjoyed listening to an "expert." Of those preferring discussion methods, 70% liked "stimulation and involvement." Covey's study found that 35% preferred structured classes, 35% wanted informal classes and study groups, 12% were interested in independent study, and 13% had no preference (1983).

The above studies relied on self-reporting of learning preferences Judith Davenport employed employed more sophisticated methods to determine the learning styles of 103 Elderhostel participants in Wyoming (1986). Those students took the Gregorc Style Deliniator, an instrument which measures four approaches to learning. The Concrete/Sequential learner uses ordered, logical methods and "hands-on" experience. Such a person has highly developed senses and prefers a quiet enviroment. Concrete/Random learners have a more experimental attitude. They work well in groups or alone, but resist teacher intervention. Abstract/Sequential learners easily convert written, verbal, and

image forms. The instructor's approach matters little if the material is meaningful and well developed. Abstract/Random learners, on the other hand, are very attentive to behavior, and prefer an active, unstructured environment. Women scored significantly higher than men in the Abstract/Random channel, whereas men scored higher in the Abstract/Sequential channel. Both men and women had significant scores in the Concrete channels, indicating that older adults need order and logic. However, the women's high scores as Abstract/Random learners seems contrary to the auditing women's preference for lectures reported by Hooper. Overall, no significant patterns emerge in older adults' learning styles, so a combination of methods seems most appropriate.

Whatever their learning preference, older adults are likely to make their presence known. In Kingston and Drotter's survey, 65% of the Idaho students and 58% of the Georgians had individual conferences with their professors (1983). In another survey by Kingston, 55% reported conferences with faculty (1982). Professors would be astonished if the younger students showed that much interest in learning.

Okun, Kardash, and Janiga hypothesized that age and college values jointly determine the perceived value of a college education (1986). A volunteer sample of 113 community college students in an introductory psychology class ranged in age from 17 to 55. They rated the importance of college values such as working condition (college environment), compensation (importance of grades relative to the amount of study required), social life,

quality of education (faculty and curricula), and recognition (social status as college students). Age was positively correlated to the quality of education value, and negatively correlated to social life value. Overall, the older students perceived college life as having greater value and quality than the younger students. It is refreshing to see that at least the older students value the academic aspects of higher education more the the social aspects. This study confirms the results of an earlier study by Wolfgang and Dowling (1981). However, the low value assigned to social life contradicts the high value older adults usually give the social factor on the Education Participation Scale.

The perceived value of college experience is also reflected in the older adults' self-reported satisfaction with higher education. Kingston's survey of auditing students in Georgia found that 94% reported classes were stimulating and 96% would recommend college classes to their friends (1982). In Kingston and Drotter's follow-up study, 95% of the Georgians and 98% of the Idahoans found classes stimulating; 96% of the Georgians and 100% of the Idahoans would recommend college classes to others (1983). According to Perkins and Robertson-Tchabo's survey of auditing students at the University of Maryland-College Park, 96% rated their university experience as very good to excellent (1981). One can only hope that the older adults' enthusiasm for higher education is infectious.

Few studies have been made of specific teaching strategies to help older adults learn, and there has been little experimental research with older adults. An exception is Woods and Bernard's investigation of strategies to improve retention of text for university students over age 59 (1987). They found that the inclusion of conceptual post-questions at intervals within a text improved both immediate and delayed recall. The inclusion of a positive attitude statement about older adults' memory did not have a statistically significant effect on retention, but it did show some improvement in immediate recall. However, post-questions probably aid the retention of text for students of all ages. Additional research is necessary to find effective learning strategies for older adults--if indeed special strategies are necessary.

Colleges and universities with limited resources should be pleased to see that older adults require few changes in the traditional college curricula or teaching methods. Furthermore, the enthusiasm for learning that older adults bring to the campus is worth the trouble of whatever minor accomodations they may require.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS

Numerous decisions must be made about arranging programs for older adults. For example, should older adults have special classes just for them, or should they be put into classes with students of all ages? Other seniors in the community may prefer classes with just their own peers, but the senior adults on

campus prefer intergenerational classes. The number of older adults who prefer classes of mixed generations is reported variously as 91% (Hooper and March 1978), 81% (Papalia-Finlay et al. 1981), and 63% (Covey 1982). Three of the original Elderhostel colleges used mixed age classes, and according to Knowlton, faculty and students of all ages rated those classes among their best ever (1977). Covey's interviews of older adults revealed that many viewed segregated classes as ageism (1982). Others wanted to contribute to the education of youth by participating in classes with them, and others enjoyed the challenge of working alongside the young students. Some of the older adults--probably retired administrators--said that intergenerational classes were simply the most practical and economical use of university resources. They realized that the university could not reasonably set aside a special class in European history for the five senior adults who wanted it when they could easily join the young people already enrolled in that course.

A survey was made of a sample of 83 institutions from the 1,093 colleges and universities offering tuition waivers for older adults to see what special services were offered (Chelsvig and Timmermann 1982). Few institutions reported any extra services: 25% had simplified registration, 14% special counseling, 18% special programs (such as Elderhostel), 5% organized groups of seniors, and 24% had special promotion, 12% by broadcast media only. Chelsvig and Timmermann conclude that because few colleges offered special service, more should. Other

research does not support that conclusion. In another survey, 50% of the older adults reported their counseling was adequate, and 25% said they did not need any counseling (Perkins and Robertson-Tchabo 1981). In that same study, 15% of the senior adults reported parking problems, a common complaint among students of all ages. Kingston and Drotter found the 21% of the older Georgians and 5% of the Idahoans on campus had parking difficulties, but 54% of the Georgians and 73% of the Idahoans opposed any special parking privileges (1983). It appears that although older adults may experience problems on campus, they do not want any overt special treatment.

Two-year colleges, however, place greater emphasis on community service, and may find they serve different adults than four-year colleges. Consequently, community colleges may need to offer other special services. After citing the national enrollment figures for the participation of older adults in organized educational activities, Fishtein and Feier (1982) remarked:

> Even more dismal than the national statistics have been those of Union College, a two-year college in New Jersey. In any semester until 1979, no more than 40 of the 80,000 senior adults in Union County registered for classes. (p. 243).

They apparently overlooked the possibility that some place other than the college was already meeting the needs of older adult learners in a more appropriate fashion. Nonetheless, the college found that by offering classes off-campus (YMCA, church, and senior center), enrollment in credit courses increase from 40 to

430 by the end of the second semester. Another 160 took non-credit courses. Additional research on senior adults and community colleges is necessary to determine the most appropriate role for two-year institutions.

Much more research has been devoted to studying the tuition fee waiver programs available to senior citizens throughout the country (Long 1980; Long and Rossing 1978, 1979; Chelsvig and Timmermann 1979, 1982). Policies vary widely from state to state. The minimum age may be 60, 62, or 65; some institutions offer credit, others specify auditing only; and many states limit enrollment on a space available basis only. Other policies exist which are unique to individual states. It was assumed that many older adults would take of advantage of this economical opportunity, but that has not happened. According to Moyer and Lago, cost is neither a barrier nor an incentive to participation by older adults (1987). As noted earlier in this review, most older adults who come to a college or university are relatively affluent and can afford to pay tuition. Cross (1982) also points out that the older adults grew up in an era when people expected to pay for higher education, unlike today's government-supported youth. Moyer and Lago assert that the many special requirements attached to the fee waiver programs make older adults feel like second class citizens, which is little incentive to enroll. The fee waiver itself suggests that the older adults are inadequate, incapable of supporting themselves, and the common auditing requirement suggests that the older adults are incapable of real college level work. Thus, the intended incentives may actually function as disincentives.

Long also observes that although most states have authorized the older adult fee waivers, few allow those adults to be counted in the FTE calculations for funding (1980). The lack of state support deters administrators from developing any affective programs or promotion for the older adults. Moreover, the auditing offer mistakenly assumes that the students have no interest in gaining credits for a degree just because of age. Perkins and Robertson-Tchabo found that half of the students liked to audit, but the other half wanted regular credit (1981). The credit students explained that they benefited more by doing the regular work. Tuition-paying older adults could actually generate revenue instead of being a drain on institutional resources. For the truly needy older students, Moyer and Lago suggest fee waivers on a sliding scale, ability-to-pay basis, or scholarships for the elderly based on need and ability, just like scholarships for youth.

Chelsvig and Timmermann reported the lack of promotion of programs for the elderly (1982), an observation echoed by Moyer and Lago (1987). One possible solution can be found in a case study of an older adult recruiting program at the University of Nevada-Reno (Gunn and Parker 1987). The UNR Foundation awarded a grant to hire and train six students over age 62 to recruit more students and generate media publicity. In just one semester, enrollment of students over 62 doubled from 68 to 124, and the numbers of students from age 50-61 also increased. The general philosophy of their strategy was to treat the older students like other students, while recognizing their particular needs and

interests. In fact, the research reviewed here suggests that philosophy should be the foundation of any college program that aims to serve older adults. To do otherwise ensures that older adults will be poorly represented on campus.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research shows that the older adults who enroll in higher education are generally well educated already, in good health, and have few financial problems. They enroll for personal satisfaction and intellectual stimulation, tending towards traditional liberal arts courses. The older adults have little need for special support services, nor do they expect such services. In fact, many intended incentives such as free tuition and the auditing option appear to be disincentives for some older adults.

The amount of research on older adults in higher education is disproportionate for the number of persons who are ever likely to enroll. Faculty have apparently studied the most conveniently accessible population, the senior citizens on their own campuses. Now that the characteristics and motives of older adult students have been identified, it is time to consider other matters. The research on older adult learning styles has been inconclusive so far; further investigation should be insightful. Most of the research cited in this paper focused on four-year institutions, but more attention should be given to community colleges which may be more appropriate providers of educational outreach. In fact, more research should use non-collegiate institutions such

as community centers, retirement complexes, nursing homes, senior nutrition sites, and so on, all of which are likely to reach many more older adults in need.

To date, there has been little published qualitative research on older adults in higher education, but naturalistic inquiry by Wolf (1983), Brown (1983), and to a lesser extent, Covey (1983), yielded valuable information not revealed in the numerous surveys. More qualitative research is recommended. For example, to determine the learning styles and classroom behavior of older adults, a researcher might conduct field studies in the classroom to observe those students in action.

Administrators of continuing higher education need not worry much about developing potentially expensive programs and services for older adults. Herbert Covey (1982) argues:

> The best strategy is one which allows older people to function in existing educational structures. This allows them to be treated equally and, over the long run, helps eradicate the notion that older people do not deserve the same opportunity for education as younger students. (p. 469).

Since some intended incentives such as tuition waivers and the auditing option actually discourage enrollment for some older adults, administrators should alter existing policies so as not to exclude anybody inadvertantly. Scholarships for older adults, for example, turns a potential embarassment over financial need into an honor. Those who can pay for education will do so. Nobody needs to feel like a second-class citizen.

Special promotion is needed, since few senior adults would normally consider higher education. Fewer still ever read the registration bulletins which contain explain the opportunities for older adults in fine print. Morever, there is competition for the older adults' time, since the most likely students are very active people, and there are many other institutions offering educational programs for older adults. The case study by Gunn and Parker (1987) explains a practical, effective way to reach prospective students.

Only colleges and universities offer the scholarly resources which some older adults seek. The intergenerational interaction is another advantage of college enrollment. As our increasingly better educated citizens grow older, more and more senior adults will appear on campus. If institutions of higher education are prepared for such students, the colleges and people of all ages will benefit.

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